

any Committee of Congress, the General Accounting Office, and other Federal agencies authorized by law to receive such information. A court of competent jurisdiction may obtain the information in response to an order.

EIA will publish monthly inventory estimates and net withdrawals estimates (withdrawals minus additions) as well as annual information on LNG storage capacities for the United States and several multi-state regions to the extent that confidentiality for company-specific information allows. In order to preserve the confidentiality of company-specific information, EIA Standard 2002-22, "Non-disclosure of Company Identifiable Data in Aggregate Cells," would be used. A copy of this standard

may be obtained at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/smg/standard.pdf>. Under these rules, EIA-913 information would be published at an aggregate multi-state level based on the current EIA underground storage regions. Such primary suppression of confidential data may result in further complementary suppression of data in publications in which this data may be incorporated. Thus, confidentiality of company-specific information would be maintained at the loss of geographic detail. However this rule could be waived if the affected respondents agree.

The operators of LNG storage facilities will be asked to submit monthly reports of inventories, additions and

withdrawals, and annual reports of facility characteristics. EIA will publish monthly inventory estimates and net withdrawals estimates (withdrawals minus additions) for the United States and several multi-state regions to the extent that confidentiality for company-specific information allows. These regions are chosen based on the current EIA underground natural gas storage regions, which reflect the major natural gas production and distribution regions, familiarity to both respondents and data users and current EIA disclosure restrictions. The following is an example of the monthly data format and regions:

Region	Total storage capacity	Inventory	Percent change from same period last year	Net withdrawals
East .....	.....	.....	.....	.....
New England and Mid-Atlantic .....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Other .....	.....	.....	.....	.....
West & Producing .....	.....	.....	.....	.....
USA Total .....	.....	.....	.....	.....

Similarly annual summaries of facility characteristics will be provided at the United States level and the same multi-state regions to the extent that confidentiality for company-specific information allows.

As an alternative to collecting the data under the confidentiality arrangements outlined above, EIA has the option of collecting the Form EIA-913 information as confidential in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 (CIPSEA) (Title 5 of Pub. L. 107-347). If the Form EIA-913 information is collected under CIPSEA, the information could not be disclosed by EIA in identifiable form, for any use other than an exclusively statistical purpose, except with the informed consent of the respondent. As defined in CIPSEA, the term "statistical purpose" (A) means the description, estimation, or analysis of the characteristics of groups, without identifying the individuals or organizations that comprise such groups; and (B) includes the development, implementation, or maintenance of methods, technical or administrative procedures, or information resources that support the purposes described in subparagraph (A).

The requirement that information collected under CIPSEA be used exclusively for statistical purposes has both advantages and disadvantages. A

primary advantage of collecting information in accordance with CIPSEA is that the information could not be used for any non-statistical purpose including any administrative, regulatory, law enforcement, adjudicatory, or other purpose that affects the rights, privileges, or benefits of a particular identifiable respondent. A primary disadvantage in collecting information in accordance with CIPSEA is that, without a respondent's informed consent, the information could not be shared with other Federal non-EIA personnel for non-statistical purposes in the event of a major energy supply situation. This restriction on sharing could severely hamper any timely U.S. government actions in the event of significant supply problems.

## II. Current Actions

EIA will be requesting approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to conduct a monthly and annual information collection program via Form EIA-913, "Monthly and Annual Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Storage Report." The respondents for the EIA-913 will comprise operators of approximately 100 LNG storage facilities (the total estimated number of facilities currently active in the United States).

## III. Request for Comments

Prospective respondents and other interested parties should comment on

the actions discussed in item II. The following guidelines are provided to assist in the preparation of comments.

### 1. General Issues

A. Is the proposed collection of information necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency and does the information have practical utility? Practical utility is defined as the actual usefulness of information to or for an agency, taking into account its accuracy, adequacy, reliability, timeliness, and the agency's ability to process the information it collects.

B. What enhancements can be made to the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected?

C. Should the proposed collection of information be conducted under EIA's existing confidentiality provisions, or under the provisions of the Confidential Information and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002?

### 2. As a Potential Respondent to the Request for Information

A. What actions could be taken to help ensure and maximize the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of the information to be collected?

B. Are the instructions and definitions clear and sufficient? If not, which instructions or definitions need clarification?

C. Can the information be submitted by the due date?